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SUBJECT: CONGO(B) - MAY 2009 UN UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: STATE 130829

¶1. Embassy Brazzaville has been in touch with both the government focal point for the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights and the principal human rights NGO in Congo(B).

¶2. On the government side, the focal point is Valentin Mavoungou, Director General of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms at the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. According to him, the Republic of Congo has regularly conducted and passed the periodic reviews. Concerning the 2009 review, he said that the government's report had already been prepared, under the direction of a committee established for this purpose and composed of representatives from the Government, all human rights NGOs, and other civil society organizations (i.e., churches). The report will be submitted to the Minister of Justice for approval. Once approved, it will be sent to Geneva for the review in May 2009. When the review is conducted, a Congolese delegation led by the Minister of Justice will travel to Geneva to defend the report. The report, which we have not seen as it is still in the deliberative process, is (exactly) 20 pages long, including 5 pages from the NGOs.

¶3. Cross-checking with the NGO side, Roger Owoko, the head of the NGO OCDH (Congolese Human Rights Observatory) confirmed the state of affairs described by Mr. Mavoungou, specifically OCDH involvement in the review. However, he also noted that the NGO portion of the report had been sent to the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH French acronym).

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